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# Department of State TELEGRAM

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EXCISE

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17
ACTION EA-20

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-08 L-04 NSAE-00
NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 RSR-01 /092 W
006238

R 070900Z AUG 71
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8376
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
AMCONSUL DANANG
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 1/26/82
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

Saigon 12596 14/7/2

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 12596

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUBJ: GENERAL MINH'S CANDIDACY

1. SUMMARY. [redacted] TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 7 THAT VICE PRESIDENT KY'S INABILITY TO BE A CANDIDATE WILL NOT REPEAT "NOT DECISIVELY AFFECT GENERAL MINH'S OWN CANDIDACY." [redacted] ALSO EXPRESSED STRONG PESSIMISM OVER GENERAL MINH'S CHANCES OF ELECTION AND BELIEVES THAT BIG MINH SHOULD DECIDE WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS ON WHETHER TO WITHDRAW HIS CANDIDACY. END SUMMARY.

2. [redacted] JERAL [redacted] TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 7 THAT BIG MINH'S DECISION ON WHETHER TO REMAIN IN THE PRESIDENTIAL RACE DEPENDS MORE ON ESTIMATES OF FRAUD IN THE FORTHCOMING LH AND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS THAN ON VICE PRESIDENT KY'S FAILAURE TO QUALIFY AS A CANDIDATE. [redacted] STATED THAT GENERAL MINH IS WILLING TO ACCEPT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF "INEVITABLE" ELECTION IRREGULARITIES BUT WILL WITHDRAW "IF INDICATIONS OF FRAUD ARE EXCESSIVELY HIGH." [redacted] ALSO SAID THAT KY'S REFUSAL TO SUPPORT MINH'S PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDACY SIMILARLY WILL BY ITSELF NOT CAUSE GENERAL MINH TO WITHDRAW FROM THE ELECTIONS.

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3. [redacted] BELIEVES THAT GENERAL MINH SHOULD MAKE HIS FINAL DECISION ON REMAINING IN THE RACE WITHIN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AND IN ANY EVENT BEFORE THE LH ELECTIONS, AUGUST 29. HE PREDICATED THAT IF BIG MINH DELAYS HIS DECISION TOO LONG MANY PEOPLE WILL INTERPRET HIS WITHDRAWAL AS A SIGN OF WEAKNESS AND FEAR RATHER THAN OF GENUINE PROTEST. b-1 ed

4. [redacted] EXPRESSED PESSIMISM OVER GENERAL MINH'S CHANCES OF ELECTION. HE PREDICTED THAT THIEU "CERTAINLY WILL BE REELECTED," NOTED THAT MOST PEOPLE ARE INDIFFERENCT TWOARDS THE ELECTIONS, AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MOST CATHOLICS WILL SUPPORT THIEU, b-1 ed [redacted] CATHOLIC CRITICISM OF THIEU'S HANDLING OF KY'S CANDIDACY. [redacted] CONCLUDED THAT "IT IS NOT IMPORTANT WHO IS ELECTED PRESIDENT IN OCTOBER; OUR PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE IS TO PREPARE FOR FUTURE EVENTS AND DEVELOP A PEOPLE'S FORCE TO CONFRONT A COMMUNIST POLITICAL CHALLENGE."

5. COMMENT: [redacted] OBSERVATIONS GENERALLY ACCORD WITH OTHER INDICATIONS [redacted] THAT THE GENERAL WILL REMAIN IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION FOR THE TIME BEING AND THAT HIS DECISION TO WITHDRAW WILL BE INFLUENCED MORE BY EXTIMATES OF ELECTION FRAUD THAN BY VICE PRESIDENT KY'S DISQUALIFICATION AS A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. LIKE MANY VIETNAMESE, [redacted] EXPECTS MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS TO FLOW FROM US-PRC CONTACTS AND LOCAL POPULAR DISSENSION WHICH WILL HAVE IMPORTANT REPERCUSSIONS ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN VIETNAM AND [redacted] THUS BELIEVES IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE THAN CONCENTRATE ON THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS. b-1 ed
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